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ABSTRACT

The report discusses the Ford Foundation's support for the arts in the United States since 1981. The premise upon which the Foundation provides such support is that the arts provide an immediate and intense means of communication, both in the present and across the centuries. A potent reflector and interpreter of values, art illuminates the present and reinterprets the past such that a nation can see itself more clearly and better explore the world around it. The report describes an arts program which reflects the Foundation's sensitivity to the needs of the arts in this country. The program consists of three interrelated areas of interest: (1) the creation of new performing art; (2) the strengthening of minority arts and arts institutions through pluralism and diversity; and (3) the documentation of cultural heritage. The role of independent foundation support of the arts is discussed, and measures are outlined through which the Foundation aims to stimulate creativity, enhance the quality of art, and increase access to the arts. Specific discussion of arts organization and their funding includes consideration of how individuals, corporations, government, and the marketplace, as well as foundations, all contribute to the support of the arts. (TRS)

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Ford Foundation Support for the Arts in the United States

A discussion of new emphases in the Foundation's arts program

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A working paper from the Ford Foundation

Ford Foundation Support for the Arts in the United States

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448 August 1986

Preface

At their finest, the arts communicate an intensity of experience, an integrity of vision that remind us what humankind can achieve. Artistic creativity--both our own and that in which we share across time--is a large part of what makes us human.

Enhancing the quality of the arts and broadening access to them have been important goals of the Ford Foundation since 1957. Both as an expression of human potential and as a vital social resource, the arts have figured prominently in the Foundation's devotion to improving the quality of life in the United States and the developing world. This working paper is the first full discussion of our support for the arts in the United States since the Foundation's reorganization in 1981. In describing our new program, developed after wide consultation in the field, the paper outlines measures through which the Foundation aims to stimulate creativity, to enhance the quality of art, and to increase access to the arts.

The working paper draws upon an analysis of the role of independent foundations in support of the arts, prepared for the Foundation by Paul DiMaggio, executive director of Yale University's Program on Non-Profit Organizations.

Susan V. Berresford
Vice-President
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Arts Organizations and Their Funding

The arts in the United States have undergone an unprecedented expansion in the past thirty years. The most remarkable growth has been in the sheer number of institutions. Thousands of new theaters, dance companies, chamber groups, opera companies, and art museums, not to mention neighborhood and community arts groups, were established during the 1960s and 1970s. Organizations in all artistic disciplines have grown in budget and staff size and in the number of programs they offer. Spurred by funding agencies as well as by community needs, extensive outreach--in-school programs, park concerts, local and regional touring--has become an accepted part of virtually all major institutions' activities, increasing budgetary needs and adding to the complexity of administration.

A combination of social, economic, and cultural forces was responsible for this phenomenon: a better educated population with enlarged cultural horizons, a period of strong economic growth and prosperity, and a generation of young artists who, while drawing from European art forms, expressed themselves in uniquely American ways. Dance and theater are perhaps the most arresting examples of this creativity and growth. Thirty years ago, dance in America was a tiny, struggling art, and theater was almost entirely commercial and largely centered in New York. Today we have world-class dance companies and a national audience for dance, as well as a vigorous noncommercial professional theater that is responsible for most of the serious dramatic work in the United States.

During the past thirty years, too, the arts strengthened their American identity, evolving new forms and relying less on traditional models. Modern

dance, which, along with jazz, is America's best-known contribution to the world's culture, invented a new vocabulary of movement. The growth of regional opera companies was matched by the development of gifted young American singers, many of whom have established international reputations. Led by the abstract expressionists of the 1950s, the United States displaced Europe as the leading center of the visual arts.

Strong ethnic and minority influences infused the arts. Among the outstanding groups were the Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Negro Ensemble Company, and such grass-roots companies as El Teatro Campesino, which emerged in the 1960s from migrant workers' strikes in California. Interesting alternative and experimental movements in the performing and visual arts contributed to the vitality of the 1960s and 1970s and continue today.

Institutional variety and complexity are matched by the complexity of arts funding. Prior to 1955, orchestras, opera companies, and museums depended mainly on wealthy patrons, the American counterparts of Europe's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dukes and princes. Today, the contemporary manager or director must deal with a range of funders--government, foundations, and corporations, as well as individual donors.

To obtain a complete and up-to-date review of funding for the arts, the Foundation commissioned a paper from Paul DiMaggio, associate professor of sociology and executive director of the Program on Non-Profit Organizations at Yale University's Institution for Social and Policy Studies. Entitled "The Role of Independent Foundations in Support of the Arts," the paper analyzes the scale and characteristics of the various segments of the funding community; summarizes the history of foundations' assistance to the arts,

highlighting several outstanding foundation programs; and addresses the special role of independent foundations in support of the arts.* A brief description of the various funding sectors, based on DiMaggio's analysis, follows.

Individuals

Total giving by individuals has grown considerably in the past three decades, from approximately $7 billion in 1956 to more than $61 billion in 1983. Though the proportion of individual giving directed to the arts is relatively small, it nevertheless represents the arts' greatest source of private support. Future prospects for individual donations to the arts depend upon the state of the economy and the effects of changes in the federal tax laws. There are divergent opinions about the impact of recent and proposed changes, making the course of individual donations difficult to predict.

We do, however, know a good deal about the nature and content of individual patronage. It is directed, by and large, to established arts organizations, most notably art museums and symphony orchestras, but also ballet and opera companies and regional theaters. It is, as a rule, less supportive of smaller or alternative institutions or innovative programs. In general, individual donors support institutions whose repertory or contribution to a community appeal to them.

Corporations

Between 1975 and 1980, business philanthropy grew more rapidly than any other

*Non-Profit Enterprise in the Arts, Paul DiMaggio, editor. (New York: Oxford University Press, October 1986.)

form of private giving, more than doubling in just five years. Since 1980, corporate support for the arts has leveled off at about 11 or 12 percent of company contributions, or roughly $400 million. A study of corporate contributions in Massachusetts by sociologist Michael Useem suggests that "the honeymoon between corporations and the arts may be nearing an end, albeit one more likely to culminate in a stable marriage than divorce." Regardless of the level of funding, corporate donors face more pressing constraints than other philanthropists. Their giving is often tied to yearly profits and restricted to specific geographical locations and to projects that enhance corporate identity. Corporate programs in the arts tend to be directed to recognized arts organizations, to visible programs such as those on public television, or to blockbuster art exhibitions. They usually provide funds for general support or administration rather than for artistic development.

Government

Between the inception of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 1965, and 1980, its budget grew from $2.5 million to more than $150 million. During these years a wide range of other government programs provided some support for the arts--for example, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Smithsonian Institution, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Museum Services Institute, Housing and Urban Development block grants--which increased direct federal support for the arts to a level that is impossible to quantify given the decentralized systems that dispensed the funds. NEA support increased markedly during most of the 1970s, rising from $15 million in 1971 to $123 million in 1978. It leveled off during the Carter

administration and has been relatively stagnant since; appropriations have hovered at the $150 million to $160 million mark from 1979 to the present. In deflated dollars, annual appropriations are about where they were in the middle 1970s. Of all the funders, the NEA has the broadest constituency and engages in the widest range of programming. It provides ongoing general support to large and small arts institutions in all disciplines, makes grants to individuals, conducts artists-in-the-schools programs, and gives some support to innovative activities.

States also play an important funding role. In fact, they are gradually overtaking the federal government in the amount of support they provide to the arts. State aid grew from less than $3 million in 1968 to more than $120 million in 1981; municipal support also rose sharply during this period. In 1984 states appropriated $137 million, and the figure for 1985 was well over $160 million. Because more than 20 percent of the NEA budget is distributed through the states, state resources are now greater than those of the NEA. State funding activities tend to address the same broad constituency as the NEA, giving somewhat more attention to smaller organizations and local arts agencies. Though there are few hard data on the effects of the changing public role on the budgets of arts organizations, two authorities--the American Symphony Orchestra League and the Theatre Communications Group--report that public support, as a proportion of total budgets, has declined somewhat for orchestras and theaters; within the public sector, they find, state support has come to play a slightly larger role than federal support.

Public arts agencies operate under dual imperatives--to support the most established organizations and to provide access to the arts to a wide range of people. These demands inevitably create tensions when resources are not expanding. Public grants tend to be relatively small and widely scattered. Though government has acknowledged a special responsibility to encourage the experimental and innovative, its support in this area is subject to the same geographic and demographic requirements as its more conventional funding. DiMaggio says that public programs promote a wider range of values than other types of donors, including excellence in both traditional and nontraditional art forms. They also promote innovation, access, diversity, conservation at the federal level, and participation at the local level. DiMaggio notes, however, that "because they must support so many purposes, public agencies cannot concentrate on individual fields to the same degree as private foundations."

The Marketplace

No summary of support for the arts can exclude the marketplace. Earned income plays a crucial role in the finances of most contemporary arts organizations. On average, large nonprofit theaters earn 65 to 70 percent of their operating income, smaller experimental theaters between 35 to 45 percent, orchestras 45 to 60 percent, dance companies 55 to 65 percent, opera companies 45 to 55 percent, art museums approximately 33 percent. In recent years established arts organizations have become quite sophisticated in promotion, ticket pricing, and building subscription bases, and the results have paid off handsomely with increased attendance and income. Indeed, economist William

Baumol notes that performing arts organizations have suffered far less from the "inflation disease" over the past decade than many had predicted. However, dependence on the marketplace inhibits pursuit of some cherished values. The logic of the marketplace discourages organizations from presenting innovative productions or exhibitions that are unlikely to appeal (at least at the outset) to a wide public. Nor is the marketplace always sufficiently supportive of pluralism and diversity in the arts.

Foundations

Foundations were the original institutional source of contributed income to nonprofit arts organizations, and they still support the arts at levels roughly comparable to that of the corporate and public sectors. However, foundation arts programs that focus on specific and well-formulated objectives have the potential to exert an influence above and beyond the size of their contributions.

Current foundation support for cultural activities seems stable at 14 to 15 percent of foundation disbursements (over $300 million), and there is no evidence of a wholesale reallocation of foundation appropriations from the arts to other beneficiaries.* About half of this amount directly supports the performing or visual arts; the rest goes to such activities as public television, university research, and libraries. Only a handful of foundations--notably Ford, Andrew W. Mellon, and Rockefeller--maintain multipurpose, national programs; together they provide less than 5 percent of

*Most of the data in this section are based on information on forty-seven of the fifty-four largest independent foundations, collected by Karla Shephard as part of a study sponsored by the Twentieth Century Fund, and on file at the Foundation Center Library.

total foundation grants in the field. Several other national foundations maintain special-purpose national programs. Prominent among these are the Getty Trust in the visual arts and conservation, the Shubert Foundation in theater, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in arts education, and the Kresge Foundation, which makes large construction grants for arts facilities. Supplementing these, are a far larger number of foundations--among them the Hewlett Foundation, the Pew Memorial Trust, the Ahmanson Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation--with long-term local or regional programs of arts giving. Locally oriented foundation support, which comprises a large part of total foundation funding in the arts, makes foundations' impact geographically uneven. Arts institutions in cities with robust foundation communities like Philadelphia, Minneapolis, or San Francisco have greater access to funding than do those in such places as Atlanta, Cincinnati, or--until the intervention of the National Arts Stabilization Fund--Boston.

One of the greatest assets of independent foundations, DiMaggio contends, is their ability to "focus their resources to a greater extent than governments or community foundations," and their relative autonomy enables them to "act without undue concern for public relations. They can also contribute quietly to vital behind-the-scenes efforts that lack the gloss of blockbuster exhibits or of highly visible capital campaigns." Finally, DiMaggio says, "the independence of the private foundation makes it possible for it to take risks."

This capacity to take risks and provide leadership is especially valuable in fields poorly supported by other types of funders. For example, the few private foundations that support experimental or innovative organizations,

minority institutions and artists, and the few that have long-term, clearly focused national programs with systematically developed program commitments have an influence and visibility that far exceeds the size of their contribution. Such foundations play a particularly important national role, both through their contributions to purposes that receive relatively little other support and through their leadership of the field as a whole.

DiMaggio's summary of arts funding concludes that "the financial outlook for the arts is neither particularly buoyant nor particularly grim. During the 1970s, private foundation support declined relative to that of other sources, but federal and corporate arts donations increased markedly. During the early 1980s, the decrease in federal outlays was offset by the growth of corporate and state support and earned income. In the aggregate, the pluralistic system of American arts support remains relatively stable and capable of maintaining the current volume of artistic activity."

DiMaggio notes, however, that important needs exist in particular areas or fields. He argues, for example, that there are few funding markets for genuine innovations; for the development of alternative or minority institutions that contribute to cultural pluralism; or for the documentation of artists or the preservation of their performances.

DiMaggio concludes that private foundations, because of their "numbers, variety, and relative autonomy from political and economic pressures," have a vital role to play in meeting these needs.

The Ford Foundation and the Arts

The Ford Foundation has a long history of support for the arts. As early as 1955, a paper by H. Rowan Gaither, Jr., then president of the Foundation, stated that "because cultural affairs are such an important part of American life, they are particularly appropriate for support by a foundation. The magnitude of their needs is great and sums of the dimensions required are not likely to be forthcoming from other sources."

In 1957 the Trustees approved an exploratory program in the humanities and the arts with annual budgets of $2 million. Funds were used for studies of the opportunities and needs in the performing and visual arts and for two grant programs: aid to creative artists at critical stages of their careers and experimental and demonstration programs of potential national significance. In recapitulating U.S. developments in the arts in the 1950s, the New York Times wrote on December 27, 1959:

> The entrance of the Ford Foundation into the arts was another sign of the times. Its first grants were large by conventional standards but limited when judged by the enormous means at its disposal. Reflection and imagination, however, went into its policy as its first efforts were aimed at helping creative artists, opening forums for interpreters and supporting institutions with a point of view.

In 1962, after a period of intensive study, the Foundation launched a major institutional support program, stating that the "arts in the United States need both enlarged financial resources and greater national focus." Its intent was to "bring about important capital and program developments and pull into the arts on a more systematic basis available non-Ford Foundation funds from private and corporate sources throughout the country." The aim was to raise the arts to new levels of artistic achievement and financial stability. The program focused on promising institutions and, through

judiciously constructed long-term support, helped them attain higher levels of artistic quality. Its emphasis was on the performing arts, principally ballet, regional theater, and symphony orchestras. Some of our most important ballet companies and theaters--the Pennsylvania and San Francisco ballets and the Alley Theatre and Arena Stage, for example--were developed with Foundation aid over an extended period. At the same time, the Foundation continued to back experimental projects and to make individual grants. In the eleven-year period from 1962 through 1972, annual arts expenditures averaged $9.5 million, excluding the $85 million symphony orchestra program.

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s the Foundation was a major contributor to the arts in the United States. The scale of its funding, the design of its programs, and the care with which they were administered gave the Foundation immense influence. Not only did the Foundation's initiatives pave the way for other foundations to enter the arts, but they also encouraged participation by other funding sectors. Inherent in the Foundation's concept of institutional funding was the necessity of developing community sources of support. Gradually community support of the arts changed giving patterns and considerably altered marketing and management practices of arts institutions. The Foundation also helped strengthen arts organizations through matching grants and by encouraging audience development, cost sharing of basic services, and improved administration.

In 1972, after a decade of major activity, the Foundation reviewed its arts policy. The review examined the program's achievements, the development of other funding sources, and current needs of the field. As a result of the review, the nature of the Foundation's support to institutions began to change

in 1973-74. Institutional operating grants diminished and funds were concentrated on the cash reserve program, which had been established in 1971 to address the long-term viability of performing arts institutions. The cash reserve, or "stabilization strategy," did not involve the Foundation in operating budgets, which were by that time more properly the responsibility of local committees and public agencies. Instead it attempted to arrest the pattern of crisis management of arts organizations. Its central purpose was to help an organization develop the financial resources and management tools necessary to maintain a fiscally sound environment capable of supporting its artistic goals. The form of support provided in a stabilization grant followed what might be called a "balance-sheet strategy." This encouraged organizations to develop planning procedures that went beyond the annual forecasting of income and expenses. Grants covered a five-year period and provided two forms of support: funds to liquidate the current portion (generally one-half) of an organization's base-year accumulated deficit, and funds to create a restricted working capital reserve from which management might borrow to meet obligations on a timely basis.

Over the course of a decade the stabilization program significantly improved the financial condition of arts organizations by emphasizing incentives and rewards for sound management practices. It proved to be not only an effective philanthropic tool for donors but also a remarkably successful means of improving the long-term financial position of most of the organizations that received stabilization grants. By the close of fiscal 1981, forty-three organizations had completed the stabilization process. Although all grants were not equally successful, a dramatic change in the

critical elements of the aggregate balance-sheet position of the forty-three organizations had taken place. This line of Foundation support culminated in the establishment of the independent National Arts Stabilization Fund (NASF) in 1983.*

The Foundation's role changed for at least two other reasons, as well. The 1970s saw a radical expansion of funding sources for the arts. The growth of the National Endowment for the Arts during this period clearly changed the topography of arts giving, as did such factors as the development of other national foundation programs and the gradual strengthening of local funding sources--including foundations, corporations, individuals, united arts funds and the like, which served to diversify the funding picture. The success of arts organizations in garnering additional support was in part attributable to improvements in the ways they managed their affairs. During the 1970s, however, the Foundation itself experienced budgetary constraints that reduced its scale of operations. In a six-year period, its total annual spending declined from a high of $261 million in 1974 to $118 million in 1979. As its resources contracted and other funding sources for the arts emerged in the mid-1970s, the Foundation began to change its priorities and support for the arts decreased. In the past few years funding has stabilized at about $3 million per year.

Until the reorganization of the Foundation in 1981, the arts program continued to emphasize the stabilization strategy, but it also provided modest

*The Foundation's initial commitment was $7 million, and the Rockefeller and Andrew W. Mellon foundations gave a total of $2 million. NASF was designed to expand the reach and effects of the earlier stabilization program by forging new alliances between local and national donors, pooling contributions from foundations, corporations, and other donors, both public and private.

assistance for the performing arts (through support for new play production), for individual grants, and for opportunities in the arts for women and minorities.

In 1981 the Foundation again reexamined its role in the arts. A paper prepared then strongly encouraged attention to arts and culture under the Foundation's new program themes, but concluded that "the potential of the arts and culture for advancing social values could not be adequately realized if they were considered only as ancillary aids to the [other program] themes." It recommended that "the Foundation either accept arts and culture as a theme in its own right, or link it to education in a theme with an appropriately extended budget and staff." In the June 1981 Board of Trustees meeting, there was general agreement, as stated in the meeting's minutes, that "the Foundation should continue a substantial interest in arts and culture." It was subsequently decided that the arts would be part of the Education and Culture program. Trustees urged that staff develop a program in the arts that encouraged creativity and artistic quality and produced high leverage for modest dollars; they recommended as well that part of our work in the arts be linked closely with other Foundation interests.

The program in the arts that the Foundation has been developing since 1982 is described in the following pages. The program is intended to reflect the Trustees' concern for creativity, leverage, and pluralism and diversity in American society. It emphasizes partnerships with other funding sources, particularly in areas that offer promising opportunities for foundations to exercise leadership.

Ford Foundation Priorities in the Arts

The Education and Culture program staff regularly meet with heads of major arts service organizations and talk with leading artists and directors of arts institutions to hear their views of the outstanding needs in their respective disciplines. Participants in these meetings are aware that the Foundation does not provide general or core support to arts institutions. Such general support is available from government, corporations, local foundations, and individuals. The special niche of national foundations has been creative and flexible project support; to maintain a capacity for this kind of support, they cannot allow particular institutions to become dependent upon them for regular operating revenue.

The artists and administrators we have consulted identify a number of priorities. Outstanding among them is support for innovative and developmental work, for the kinds of projects generally not supported by the corporate sector or individual donors and insufficiently attended to by government agencies. Encouragement of diversity and pluralism is another priority cited by mainstream as well as minority artists. In his report to the Foundation, Paul DiMaggio identified certain areas that he sees as without natural "markets" in the donor community. Among these areas, we believe the strongest and most appropriate for national foundation funding are:

-- Development of new work and innovative forms of artistic expression.

-- Furtherance of pluralism and diversity, encouraging the most talented artists and arts organizations outside the traditions of mainstream culture.

-- Conservation outside of the visual arts, documenting of performance on film, archival and oral history, and notation.

The Development of New Performing Art

The arts continue to enrich our culture through an ongoing infusion of new creative work. New art, which reinterprets the past and reflects and illuminates the present, is, therefore, central to the continuing vitality of any art form. Though artistic creativity cannot be halted, it can be discouraged by economic systems and methods of subsidy that overemphasize conservatism and the values of the marketplace. The new and the strange are not always beguiling, and audiences have turned away in droves from first performances of what are now regarded as masterpieces. The pluralistic American system for support of the arts, while often providing adequate maintenance for existing organizations, fails to provide sufficiently for experimentation. The task of creating optimum conditions for the development of new art and new art forms is one that Ford and other national foundations have successfully addressed in the past through a variety of means, including the commissioning of new work, artist-in-residence programs, individual grants to creative artists, and support of experimental groups and developmental work.

Having said that, one must ask how, out of the plethora of opportunities and needs, one selects the most promising or pressing. Since all the arts need continuing infusions of new work, how does one choose among art forms and types of support? Any initiative that attempts to respond to the need for innovation and the creation of new art must, of necessity, be highly sensitive to the sometimes mercurial changes in the world of the arts. The most interesting and challenging opportunities often arise unexpectedly and one needs an open mind and a flexible program to address them most advantageously. In a large and diverse field where work is carried out

principally through numerous small units, it is wise to avoid rigid and inflexible plans. Broad and regular consultation with the field, knowledge, and intuition inform one's choices. One also heeds what colleagues in both the public and private sectors are and are not doing, since duplication is wasteful and complementarity desirable. In the end, one works in art forms and through institutions that have the greatest promise at a given moment.

The performing arts offer such promise at this time, and staff believe that they should be the focus of our efforts to promote artistic innovation. Of special note, we believe, is a new interconnectedness among performing arts disciplines that invites stimulating and creative collaborations. Foundation assistance is warranted because without it this promise may not be realized. The existing support system for dance, theater, opera companies, or even symphony orchestras does not provide sufficiently for collaborations, for the sometimes costly experimentation that may well end in costly failures; yet without risking those failures, successes may never be born.

The support of innovation and the development of new art applies, in our view, to both recognized and emerging artists and arts institutions. Art is not an endeavor in which fresh ideas are incubated solely by the ambitious young; ideas move, very often, in the other direction, from successful practitioners to their new colleagues. A principal thrust of our activity is to offer fresh opportunities to those of proven achievement, permitting them to experiment and extend themselves in new directions.

Among the strategies that may be employed in the support of innovation and the development of new performing art are the following.

Collaboration. What is exciting about the performing arts today is that boundaries are being crossed and interesting work produced, often as a result of collaborative efforts. Of course, the performing arts are by their nature collaborative, but recently the term has been used to describe such cross-disciplinary activities as performance art and collaborations among composers, choreographers, and visual artists whose creations may have no formal designation except that of theater in the broadest sense. Music critic John Rockwell in the New York Times cites the new performance art as a "manifestation of the same synthesis of the arts that produced Greek tragedy, medieval drama, opera and ballet." Art critic Dore Ashton writes: "The theatrical journey from the nineteenth century to the present can be characterized as a flight from genres. Already Baudelaire in the mid-nineteenth century could see the potential of Wagner's theory of the Gesamtkunstwerk, the total work of art, remarking that Wagner saw the dramatic art as 'the marriage, the coincidence of several arts, as the art par excellence, the most synthetic, the most perfect.' The drive to eliminate genres, to cross conventional boundaries and to make a grand synthetic art of all the arts has been the principal current in modern theater history." Some of today's work has echoes of the early part of the century in Paris, where Diaghilev attracted to the ballet the major talents of his time. Choreographers Fokine, Massine, Nijinsky, and Balanchine worked in collaboration with composers Stravinsky, Ravel, Satie, Debussy, and Milhaud, and with painters Bakst, Picasso, Derain, Rouault, and Cocteau.

Contemporary work of this kind is exemplified by the now historic collaboration of composer Philip Glass, director-designer Robert Wilson, and

choreographer Lucinda Childs on Einstein on the Beach, which reverberated through the arts world when it was originally produced by the Metropolitan Opera in 1976. A truly visionary work, Einstein toured the world and enjoyed a triumphant return to New York in 1985 as the culmination of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's (BAM) Next Wave Festival. The Next Wave--partially supported by the Foundation for the past three years--has attested to the richness and diversity of collaborative efforts by Meredith Monk and Ping Chong, Trisha Brown and Robert Rauschenberg, and artists like Laurie Anderson who move between pop and highbrow culture. The Next Wave's production of The Gospel at Colonus, an unlikely but effective fusion of Greek tragedy with gospel music, was a powerful and evocative adaptation of Sophocles' play, created collaboratively by composer Robert Telson and theater director Lee Breuer. Widely popular with audiences, Gospel went on to be performed at Washington's Arena Stage and other theaters throughout the country.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration has been particularly fruitful in the music theater field, by which is meant the full range of work from opera through musical comedy and musical drama to the avant-garde and performance art. During the past decade American music theater has been among the liveliest and most adventurous of the arts, developing new forms and presentation styles. Theater and opera critic Robert Marx has written of some of this work: "A number of threads run through most of these productions. The sense of invigorating and personal collaborations between composers and directors, an unusually flexible use of performance space, a reliance upon tableaux and choral movements, and perhaps most strongly, a sense of what has been called the Theater of Images." Marx describes such a theater as "the

integration of a visual arts sensibility into the stage picture . . . the integration of sound, text, and scenery [which] create[s] the meaning on an equal basis. No single visual or aural element can be successfully broken away from the others."

Foundation activity in encouraging collaborative experimentation in music theater includes the support of a consortium of companies, each of which is engaged in the long-term development of new work. The companies--Minnesota Opera, Music-Theatre Group/Lenox Art Center, Playwrights Horizons--have different aesthetic approaches but share a commitment to the collaborative process, the creation and performance of new art, and the extension of the music theater form. The Minnesota Opera Company's main thrust is the commissioning and production of contemporary American operas; Music-Theatre Group/Lenox Arts Center works extensively with avant-garde composers, writers, directors, and choreographers in the development of new forms; Playwrights Horizons, an off-Broadway company, produces only new plays and has an ongoing music theater development program. Music-Theatre Group's collaborative efforts have produced, for example, The Garden of Earthly Delights, which The New Yorker called "an exquisite, witty, satiric, and tough amalgam of music, choreographed movement, acrobatics, pantomime, and acting." Since these three companies have benefited from a sharing of artists and ideas and are engaging in coproductions as well, this project also demonstrates the advantages of interinstitutional collaboration.

This kind of creative exploration--perhaps the arts equivalent of pure research in science--is costly, but it is essential if the skills and talents of our best creative people are to be realized. Another interinstitutional

collaborative project, begun in 1985, involves helping the American Music Theater Festival to establish production alliances with major regional theaters--such as the Goodman in Chicago, the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Mass., and the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles--for the development and production of new music theater work. Its aim is to bring writers and stage directors, heretofore notably absent, into the artistic process of creating music theater works. Such alliances would involve shared productions, thereby reducing costs as well as utilizing theater and music talents for their mutual enhancement.

In our support for innovation and the development of new work in the performing arts, collaboration among creative artists in a variety of disciplines is a principal focus. Collaboration enables artists to work across formal barriers between art forms such as drama, opera, dance, and visual art. It also enables arts institutions to join forces artistically and financially for their mutual benefit. We hope to continue this type of activity by seeking out important centers of collaboration and encouraging their production activity. We may also offer commissioning opportunities to performing arts institutions, permitting them to undertake new collaborative projects. One plan under consideration is a joint composer-choreographer commissioning program. As always, we shall consult widely in the performing arts fields, continuing our dialogues with artists and arts leaders as we devise new programmatic approaches.

<u>New Performance Opportunities.</u> A second focus is to extend innovative work by helping to provide increased performance opportunities for emerging and

established artists working in new forms. The results of collaborations and other innovative work in the performing arts must reach new audiences. This is accomplished principally through touring, which offers independent artists and small companies their greatest potential for creative expression as well as earned income. The Foundation joined recently with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in supporting establishment of the National Performance Network, which will increase the touring of new performing art and promote exchange among local and visiting artists in fourteen cities--including Minneapolis, Seattle, Atlanta, Chicago, and Boston. Our support of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave, referred to earlier, contains a touring component that helps some of the works produced at BAM to be seen in other parts of the country. Other programs that address performing opportunities and the mobility of new performing art may also be considered.

Career Development. A concern for innovation in the arts and the creation of new art carries with it a concern for good training and career-entry opportunities for the creative and performing artists of the future. In keeping with the thrust of the Foundation's program, we believe that the modest funds we can devote to artists' training and career preparation should be concentrated on improving training in the performing arts in selected areas where there is a need for new approaches and where interesting opportunities present themselves. Experimentation with new approaches to professional training in the performing arts is not, to our knowledge, being undertaken except on an occasional basis by other funders, private or public. It should be emphasized that support would be directed to only a few carefully chosen projects that have the potential for effecting changes in a given field.

One project that exemplifies this approach involves ballet choreography. Although there is extraordinary choreographic creative activity in modern dance, the same cannot be said for ballet. Anna Kisselgoff recently commented in the New York Times on "the dearth of first-rate ballet choreographers." The death of George Balanchine ended an era. The remaining giants--Jerome Robbins, Antony Tudor, Frederick Ashton--are past their middle years and there does not seem to be an emerging generation to take their places.

One of the difficulties is that the priorities of large ballet companies are often inimical to creative effort. A company that must concentrate on production, touring, and audience building, and must maintain a large corps and staff, often cannot afford to produce fledgling work or give new choreographers the time and company resources they need to develop. At the 1984 conference of Dance USA,* leading figures in American dance noted that, though development of new creative talent was an issue of paramount importance to the future of ballet, it was not necessarily perceived as a priority by managements and boards of trustees responsible for the fiscal health of institutions. There is not, they felt, a lack of available talent, but there is a lack of opportunity to develop it. Therefore, it may be useful to explore alternative approaches that can focus on choreographic development within a less pressured environment, removed from the production-oriented considerations of major ballet companies. The Foundation is currently funding the Carlisle Project at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, a preeminent training institution. The project is preparing choreographers through workshops, classes, intensive musical training, and an opportunity to

*The service organization for the professional dance field.

experiment with well-trained dancers. The Carlisle Project focuses on purely developmental work. Its aim is to allow developing choreographers to work without the pressures attendant upon full-scale production. Early evaluations are encouraging and continued funding is planned. The Foundation has also supported a project at the Sundance Institute in Utah that is assisting mid-career choreographers.

Other innovative training projects that have the potential of advancing a given art form may be assisted as opportunities present themselves.

Pluralism and Diversity

The decades following World War II saw the emergence of minority and women's movements that included strong assertions of cultural identity. Neglected folk forms were rediscovered, dying traditions renewed, and Western traditions of painting and theater adapted to express the present-day perceptions and problems of minority groups. Commenting on black artists' response to the Civil Rights movement, Mary Schmidt Campbell, director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, says in her introduction to the exhibition Tradition and Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade: "Artists began to respond in measurable numbers. They organized, exhibited, protested and produced a body of images forged in the molten heat of those turbulent days."

Black theater artists, also galvanized by the Civil Rights movement, began to form their own companies and emerged as a significant new voice in American theater; their playwrights produced work that made a major contribution to American dramatic literature. Hispanic artistic activity centered on the East and West coasts. In New York, the Museo del Barrio and the Puerto Rican

Traveling Theater were created to exhibit works of Puerto Rican artists and to perform plays by Puerto Rican playwrights for Puerto Rican audiences. In California, El Teatro Campesino was born out of strikes by Chicano migrant farm workers. These three institutions are very much alive today, and each has evolved to serve broader purposes than originally envisioned. Museo del Barrio and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater are exhibiting and producing works by artists from a range of Hispanic cultures--Cuban, South and Central American--and seeking to serve a much broader Hispanic community; Campesino has added to its social concerns a deeper exploration, through fantasy, myth, and allegory, of the Chicano culture's Mexican-Indian roots.

During the 1960s the Foundation played an important role in the creation and nurturing of such outstanding minority arts institutions as the Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Negro Ensemble Company. Both institutions in the course of their history have made outstanding contributions to American and, indeed, to world culture. The Foundation was among the first in the philanthropic sector to recognize that the arts of minorities and of non-Western cultures can considerably enrich the mainstream. The Dance Theatre of Harlem gives a new dimension to classical ballet, as witness its Giselle set in the bayous of Louisiana. The style and language of black playwrights like Bullins, Walker, and Gordone, have permanently enlarged our dramatic vocabulary. In subsequent years the Foundation began assisting such other professional minority arts groups as the Frederick Douglass Center and the Studio Museum in Harlem as well as such projects as a Smithsonian Institution program to train minority museum personnel and a multiracial repertory ensemble at Arena Stage in Washington.

The Foundation's strong concern for equal opportunities for women carried over to the arts. It supported a workshop program at the American Film Institute to help aspiring women film directors obtain training and get jobs with major studios. At the American Place Theatre in New York the Foundation helped found the Women's Project, which gave visibility to women playwrights through readings and productions; currently it supports a similar program for women theater directors at American Place.

We will continue to be supportive of women's role in the arts. This may include assisting specific projects, such as those cited above, to help women gain training and access to hitherto inaccessible fields. The Foundation will continue to monitor the representation of women in arts organizations with which we are involved.

Minority Arts. The Foundation has begun to take a systematic look at the art forms and arts institutions of America's two predominant minority cultures, black and Hispanic. After completing a study of Hispanic theater across the United States, staff have begun an initiative that aims to assist the development of this vigorous art, which has a wide range of styles and a growing audience in many parts of the country. Among the most critical needs identified by the study are the development of touring circuits so that the work of these theaters can be more widely seen by both Hispanic and non-Hispanic audiences; the administrative strengthening and artistic development of the premier Hispanic theater institutions; opportunities for more contact among artists and administrators in order to share ideas, knowledge, and techniques; and better training opportunities for actors,

writers, directors, and administrators. The Foundation has begun a program to address these needs, using approaches that may be useful in other fields as well. So far, grants have been made to support a national festival of Hispanic theater companies held in August 1985 at New York's Public Theater, and a nationwide conference of Hispanic theater leaders in San Antonio, Texas. We have also made grants to further the institutional development of three major West Coast theaters--the Bilingual Foundation in Los Angeles, El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista, and El Teatro de la Esperanza in Santa Barbara--and one New York group--Repertorio Espanol.

We are also supporting a complementary endeavor, the Theatre Communications Group's Hispanic Translation Project, which aims to enrich mainstream American theater. The project commissions new translations of both classic and modern Spanish language plays, including those from Spain, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Working through TCG's constituency of 242 theaters, which will have access to the new translations, the project aims to introduce a unique and exciting dramatic literature to an American public that remains largely ignorant of its existence.

Plans for the next couple of years include a review of the aspirations and needs of a new generation of black theaters that has emerged during the past several years. We also plan to gather information nationally on both black and Hispanic visual arts institutions, and to look at the few existing Native American arts institutions. This may well be an opportune time to explore the newcomer communities in our midst. Some of the more recent Asian and Hispanic immigrants have strong artistic and cultural traditions; as these groups become more established in the United States, they can add to the cultural diversity of our society.

It should be noted that many minority institutions are fragile by virtue of their youth, insufficient funding from the private sector (and resulting overreliance on government sources), and lack of well-trained personnel. These institutions, like their mainstream colleagues several decades ago, can benefit from assistance that helps them increase earned and contributed income and develop staff expertise. To address the problem of management expertise, we are considering the initiation of one or more training projects specifically geared to the needs of minority and/or other small institutions. Some years ago, the Foundation undertook a management internship program in which carefully selected candidates served apprenticeships with major performing arts institutions; many of those interns are today heading our leading arts institutions. Some variant of this program might be developed to suit the needs of emerging performing arts companies.

Minority Access. At the other end of the minority arts spectrum is the question of minority professionals' access to mainstream institutions. If we want our arts truly to reflect our society, we must encourage minority performers, creators, interpreters, and administrators. In a major report entitled Museums for the New Century, the American Association of Museums recommended that the museum community address the underrepresentation of minorities in the museum work force. The report stated that "boards of trustees and directors should give high priority to hiring qualified minorities . . . in positions of leadership and providing opportunities for them to advance up the career ladder."

Minorities' access to careers differs in various art forms. In some fields, most notably modern dance, there is a free flow of talent and little obstacle to achievement. Such is not the case either in symphony orchestras or, as noted above, in the museum world. It is interesting to note that orchestras have increased the participation of women instrumentalists but not of black performers; the reasons for this have more to do with lack of adequate early training and role models than with indifference to the problem or with any overt attempt to exclude blacks.

There is no way the Foundation can begin to address all these imbalances, particularly those that result from lack of early training. In the past two years, however, the Foundation has made a number of grants to such professional training institutions as the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the Yale School of Drama, and to a consortium of five professional colleges of art. All of the grants focused on improving minorities' access to training and support extensive recruiting efforts as well as scholarships. Although it will be several years before the results of these projects emerge, we are convinced that they directly address the concern that the arts community should reflect the diversity of our larger society. This kind of programming is the arts equivalent of the Foundation's doctoral and postdoctoral initiatives in higher education. Though we may continue to support some similar endeavors, including an ongoing commitment to the art college consortium, it is likely that our future focus will be on apprentice or intern projects. We hope to identify particular areas where mainstream institutions can be assisted in offering apprenticeships or internships to help build a cadre of trained minorities for a given field. The museum field

is one that suggests itself, and others, such as arts administration, will also be kept in mind. These are areas in which modest amounts of money can have considerable impact. Apprentice and intern programs are not costly, but even so we are not contemplating preparing vast numbers of people, just those who can be reasonably absorbed into the system. Also, once role models exist, providing access becomes far easier.

Documentation

Two major foundations, Andrew W. Mellon and Getty, have programs to conserve visual art. However, very little is being done in other types of conservation: 1) the preservation of performance on film or tape or through notation, and 2) documentation of artists' lives through oral or audio-visual histories. We believe that an arts program concerned with supporting the creation of new art and furthering artistic pluralism and diversity may also legitimately have a concern for documenting this art and the artists who create it.

The lack of film or videotaped material on artists and other major cultural figures--not so much their works of art but the individuals themselves--impoverishes us. Without such materials, particularly on artists who communicate through other than verbal or written means--the late George Balanchine in the dance, for example--we are deprived not only of the vividness of an artist's personality, the sense of presence that can be conveyed only through hearing and seeing, but also of valuable insights into that person's art and the art of his or her times.

Society needs also to preserve performances for future generations of artists, scholars, and the public. We speak here not of productions for public broadcast such as those undertaken by PBS--Dance in America or Great Performances are examples--and funded through public and corporate sources, but rather of a simpler type of recording of performances on film and tape. Such materials are invaluable resources for the scholar and serious student of theater, dance, or other performance. This kind of low-key activity has little popularity among funders. The result is that many precious performances, including works of major choreographers and such notable actors as Rosemary Harris, Hume Cronyn, and Jason Robards, Jr., are lost to succeeding generations. In the field of dance, notation can be a useful adjunct to preservation of works on film. A work recently produced by New York City Ballet, Symphonie Concertante, originally created in 1945 by George Balanchine and long gone from any repertoire, could not have been re-created without a notated score that was discovered by chance at the Dance Notation Bureau.

During the past few years the Foundation has supported several projects to document artists and preserve performances. For example, grants have gone to the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library (NYPL) for reinstitution of its preservation laboratory; to the Theater Collection of the NYPL for the expansion of Theater on Film and Tape, an extraordinary and widely used archive of New York and regional theater productions; to the Dance Notation Bureau for notation of eighteen Balanchine ballets; to the New York Center for Visual History for creation of a film archive of noted American poets and literary figures; and to Boston University's Aesthetic Research Project to

videotape conversations with senior American artists and cultural figures. The original tapes of the latter are to be held in the Boston University library, with copies at the Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center in New York City. Also being considered is support for the establishment of a National Black Archives of Film and Broadcasting.

Foundation staff have established criteria for archival projects. The first is that, no matter where such archives are located, they be national in scope and deal with artists of national reputation; second, that they be housed in places accessible to a wide range of scholars, artists, and others; and third, that, if possible, the collections be housed in more than one repository.

This is an area that does not require vast infusions of money as there are only a few projects that meet the required standards. It is also an area that is virtually ignored by the funding community and one in which the Foundation's leadership could provide leverage. A recent $150,000 grant to the New York Center for Visual History for its Voices and Visions project helped to raise over $1 million from public and private sources.

Conclusion

The arts provide an immediate and intense means of communication, whether across the centuries or in the present moment. It is often through their art that we best comprehend societies of the past. New art reinterprets the past and illuminates the present, helping us to see ourselves more clearly and to explore the world around us. Though not in itself value-laden, art is a potent reflector and interpreter of values.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the arts have a visibility and an influence far beyond their size. In terms of dollars spent and people employed, the arts are small compared with other parts of both the profit and nonprofit worlds. Thus, it is possible in the arts to effect change and to make a difference with relatively modest means, especially if one can be highly selective and focus on individuals and institutions of great promise and/or exceptional quality.

In the preceding pages we have described an arts program that we believe is consonant with Ford Foundation goals and that can be realized with the resources available to us. In its concentration on innovation and new work in the arts, the program reflects a long history of Foundation support for groundbreaking work in many fields. In particular the program reflects a sensitivity to the needs of the arts, which has been a distinguishing feature of most of the Foundation's history.

The program's concern for pluralism also reflects the Foundation's longstanding interest in maintaining and strengthening the multifaceted character of American society. Through support of important minority arts

institutions and efforts to provide minority professionals with access to the mainstream, our work in the arts reinforces and complements other Foundation activities.

Though they may at first sight seem disparate, the three areas of interest explored in this paper have internal connections. Innovation and new work in the arts inevitably are enhanced by pluralism and diversity. Support for alternative and minority art forms and arts institutions provides new sources of material for creative artists. Some of the most interesting new performing art produced in the past few years demonstrates a fusion of non-Western and popular forms--such as salsa, gospel, and Asian theater techniques--with more traditional ones. The Gospel at Colonus, cited earlier, is a good example. Better and more accessible documentation of artists may help to provide role models for minorities as well as information and inspiration for all those engaged in creative work.

A program that supports the creation of new art, the strengthening of minority arts and arts institutions, and the documentation of our cultural heritage will, we believe, make an important contribution to the vitality and quality of the arts in the United States.